

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 24-34 are pending in this application. Claims 11-16, 18, 20, 22, and 23 were previously rejected, and claim 7, 19, and 20 were withdrawn from consideration. By this amendment, claims 11-23 are canceled and new claims 24-34 are added. No new matter is added. Applicants note that claims 24-34 correspond to allowed claims 1-10 in allowed EP Patent No. 1723026. In light of the remarks set forth below, Applicant respectfully submits that each of the pending claims is in immediate condition for immediate allowance.

Claims 11, 12, 14-16, 18, 22, and 23 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,998,591 (“Zaunberger”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,645,351 (“Muller”). Applicants note that the cancellation of claims 11-23 renders this rejection moot. However, Applicants will address the cited references as they apply the newly filed claims.

Among the limitations of independent claim 24 not present in the cited combination is “at least two mutually independent energy sources, wherein all traction drives are powerable with electric current from at least one of these independent energy sources and the steering drive unit is powerable with electric current from another of these independent energy sources.”

Among the limitations of independent claim 25 not present in the cited combination is

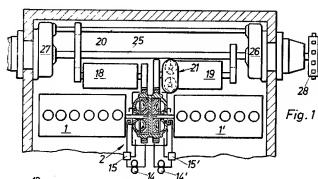
at least two mutually independent energy sources, wherein all traction drives are powerable with electric current from at least one of these independent energy sources and that the steering drive unit consists of at least two electric motors or of one electric motor with at least two mutually independent current circuits,

wherein the at least two electric motors and the independent current circuits respectively are powerable with electric current from the at least two mutually independent energy sources.

Applicant notes that in a track vehicle, as the drive system fails, the vehicle should be drivable and steerable, even with partial damage to the drive system in order to move itself, for example, out of a danger zone under its own power or with reduced drive power. (Application as

filed, paragraph [0003]). The pending claims explicitly recite that the electric steering drive system includes at least two energy sources which can be operated independently of one another with said energy sources providing electric current to said traction drive and said electric steering drive.

The Office Action acknowledges that the Zaunberger lacks two energy sources. The Examiner then includes Muller for “the use of two engines as separately controllable energy sources for a powered control vehicle”. Applicant submits that Muller fails to disclose the limitation for which it is cited.



Muller discloses a parallel arrangement of the two engines. Specifically, Muller advances a dual engine configuration to divide “the maximum power between two engines, for one thing, substantially reduces the required space and the weight of the power plant.” (Muller at col. 1, ll. 15 et seq.). As shown in FIG. 1 of Muller reproduced above, a pair of equal internal combustion engine 1 and 1' are disposed in coaxial arrangement perpendicularly to the path of the vehicle. At the opposed ends of the engines, shafts extend having the same direction of rotation. Provided at the ends of the shafts is a hydrodynamic dual coupling 2 with two separate work chambers 4 and 4' respectively. Power is taken off from coupling 2 via housing 8, which is provided with a pair of gears 16 and 17, gear 16 driving the steering mechanism 18 of the track-laying vehicle, whereas gear 17 drives the torque converter 21 and the speed-changing and reversing transmission 19 of the vehicle. In contrast to the separate engines driving different elements in the

present application, both engines in Muller drive coupling 2. Thus, the engines of Muller are not independent. For at least this reason the cited combination fails to render independent claims 24 and 25 unpatentable.

Applicant notes that there is no suggestion or disclosure to apply one motor, i.e., the principal motor 12, to the driving system and the other motor, i.e., booster motor 38, to a steering system. In fact, if one were to combine Zaunberger and Muller, the result would be Zaunberger's engine 14 having a booster motor that can be engaged to assist engine 14, i.e., motors 1, 1' when there is an excessive power demand. Thus, in addition to not disclosing that each of the two energy sources can be operated independently of one another and providing electric current to said traction drive and said electric steering drive, there is no disclosure that the two motors in Muller can be used for any other purpose than simultaneously powering the vehicle.

For at least these reasons, claims 24-34 are allowable over the combination of the combination of Zaunberger and Muller.

Claims 13 and 20 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Zaunberger and Muller in view of U.S. Patent No.: 4,917,200 ("Lucius"). Lucius was not added to cure the deficiency of the primary combination discussed above but to show additional limitations, which, even if it was to show, do not cure the deficiencies, discussed above.

Applicant has responded to all of the rejections and objections recited in the Office Action. Reconsideration and a Notice of Allowance for all of the pending claims are therefore respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes an interview would be of assistance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned at the number listed below.

It is believed that no fees or charges are required at this time in connection with the present application. However, if any fees or charges are required at this time, they may be charged to our Patent and Trademark Office Deposit Account No. 03-2412.

Respectfully submitted,
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